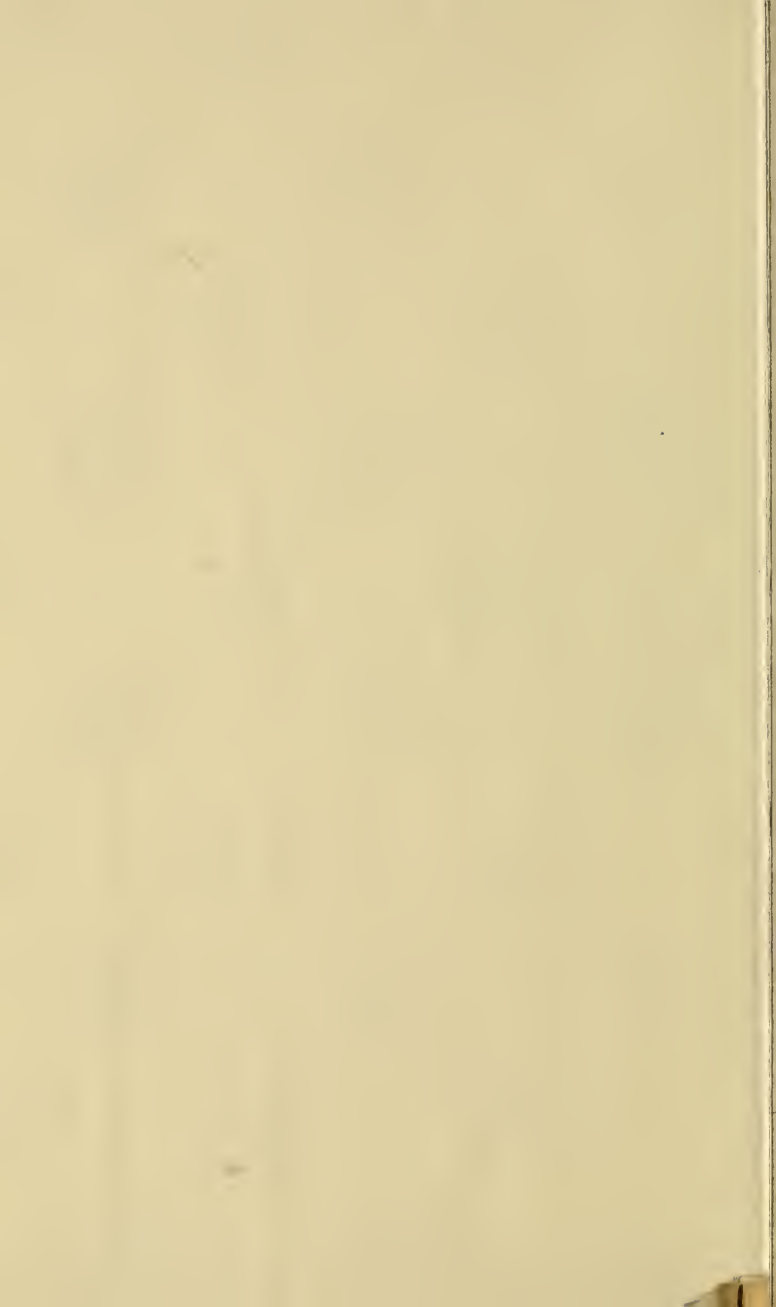


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GILLIAN;
AND
OTHER POEMS.

BY

GEORGE M. RYDER,

Author of "Los Arcos," &c., &c.



PHILADELPHIA:

CHARLES DESILVER,

714 CHESTNUT STREET.

1858.

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T O
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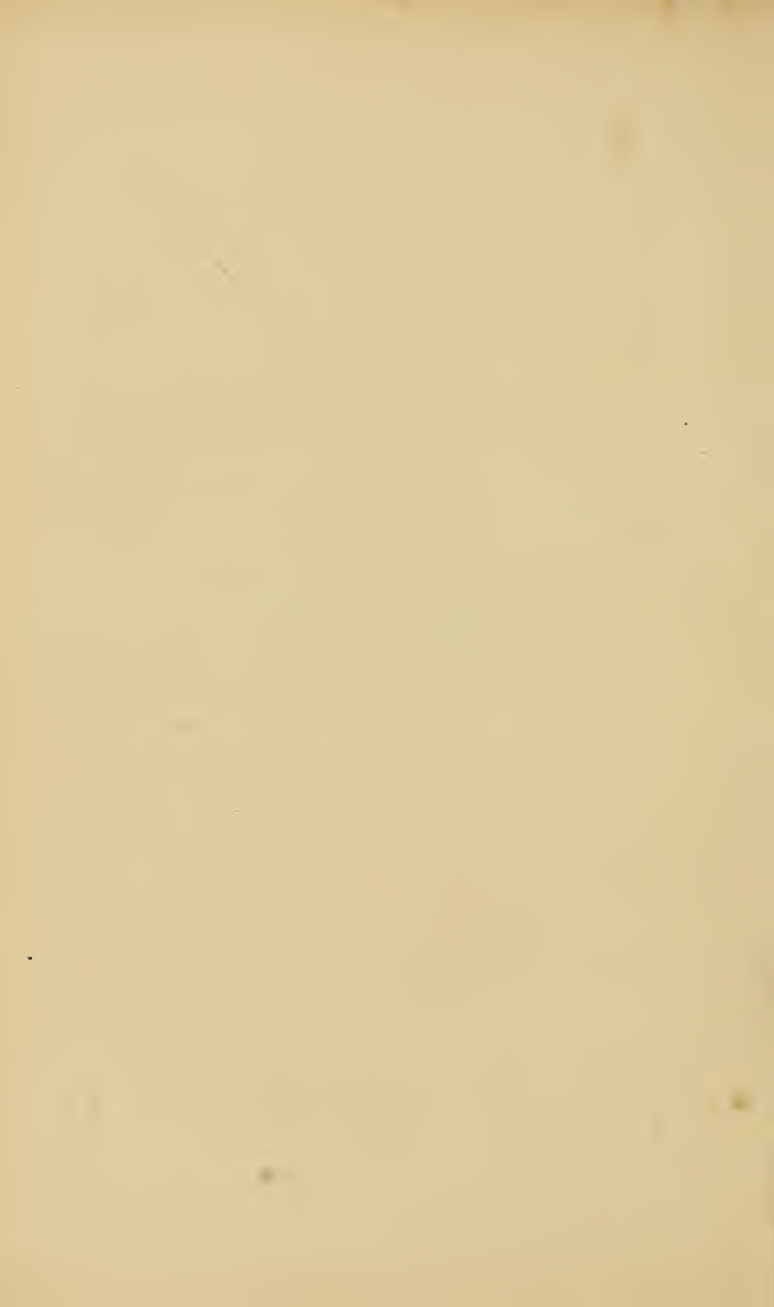
IS

AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY

HIS FRIEND,

THE AUTHOR.



P R E F A C E .

IT is rare that a work is ever issued from the press without some prefatory remarks from the author. Poetry, however, seldom needs a preface, save when it aims to be biographical, or the subject be a nation's epic. But there is one circumstance which occurred on the publication of my former poem, "Los Arcos," a "Spanish Carlist Romaunt," which induces me now to explain away an erroneous idea then entertained. The Athenæum, when courteously reviewing that production, took occasion to remark that it was "evidently written with a political intention"—an idea, entertained I presume from the fact that the noble Viscount to whom it was dedicated (Lord Ranelagh), and the author of the Notes which illustrated that work (Lieutenant Merry), had both been officers in the service of Don Carlos; were

both known as men of acknowledged bravery, and were both chivalrous supporters of the Carlist cause; the former by his ability, generosity, and rank; the latter by his ready arm, and soldier's zeal.

Now, politics or political intentions were always foreign to my tastes and pursuits; and no one who reflects, that I was then only in my twentieth year, will believe that I was endeavoring to advocate or uphold a cause, to which my interests were in no way allied, and which my age, experience, or literary attainments, (premising that I possessed any,) could advance nothing. But my sympathies had been so often aroused and enlisted in favor of Don Santos Ladron, the hero of the Romaunt, for his bravery, patriotism, and, last of all, for his untimely and regretted fate, that I ventured to essay his history in that form, in which to me a hero's deeds are best commemorated. My friend, Lieutenant Merry, kindly elucidated many passages of the poem in some very interesting notes; and I deemed it, at his suggestion, both a duty as well as an honor, to dedicate it to that noble Englishman, who forsook the ease and luxuries of his ancestral home, to fight for a cause which looked indeed, clouded and doubtful, but which he, with thousands of others, believed to be the true and the right.

Many of the minor pieces in the present volume have appeared, both in the English and American papers, as also in the Melbourne "Morning Herald," the accomplished editor of that journal waiving his usual rule of not admitting any but selected poetry in its columns; a compliment which I have not failed duly to appreciate and feel. Like the chief poem from which the book takes its title, they are most of them written in blank verse, a metre which the celebrated William Hazlitt has pronounced to have been mastered and excelled in by none, save Shakspeare and Milton; not even excepting Wordsworth. And yet, that

"Drowsy frowsy poem, the Excursion,"

as Byron termed it, stands foremost amid the beauties of English poetic literature, and for blank versification, and high sublimity of thought, is only approached by the "Festus" of Philip James Bailey. I speak of course of poets of the past and present century.

In so difficult a species of composition, then, and after a verdict launched from so majestic a tribunal, I dare hardly hope to meet with approbation; yet poetry has been the favorite pursuit of my youth, and Deo votante will be of

my manhood ; and I would fain have the critic pass leniently over an attempt, upon which I hope yet to improve.

Multa petentibus, multa desunt,

but opposed to this motto, we have the more cheering language of Longfellow—

“All are Architects of Fate,
Working in these walls of Time ;
Some with massive deeds and great,
Some with ornaments of rhyme.”

G. M. R.

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GILLIAN; AND OTHER POEMS.

GILLIAN.

Wisely the preacher spake
The homily of Life, how all is vain—
If Manhood hath a hope, or Youth a dream,
Such ever is its ending—Vanity.
I do remember me the tale of one,
And frequent tears efface the written words,
As 'twere her history might not be told :
And yet the story of that faithful love,
That life so blameless, and withal so pure,
Hath stole so oft upon my hours of thought,
That I would fain essay its chronicle.
She was a maiden of no lofty birth,
Her lineage ran not back to warrior knights

Who with the Conqueror came—nor could she trace
Ancestral deeds in generations past ;
But in the quiet valley where they dwelt,
Whose broad elms overspread their ivied home,
No name so revered, or hearts beloved,
As was her pastor-patriarch sire's, and hers.
She had not known the fostering kindness
A mother sheds her sweet young offspring round ;
Yet life dwells often on such memories
The longest treasured, for the earliest loved.
Amid the dreary voices of the past,
Ah ! none return to us with half the tone
Of those that give us back a mother gone :
Such, and so cherished, are the thoughts of mine,
That I would give my youth to live again,
But for one summer's day, beneath her smile.
Sweet Gillian ! her infant loss knew not
The sorrow, that her after childhood learnt.

Oftentimes,
I think I see her as in earlier days,
Beneath the shade of that old Gothic porch,
Crouched at her father's feet, her small white hands

Clasping his knee, and in rapt wonderment
Listing the tales that he would read to her,
How men forsaking old companionships,
Went forth into the woods, and made a home
'Mid nature's eloquent low-voiced solitude ;
And dying, gave their labors to the world,
The teachings of a wise philosophy.
Or he would tell the marvelous histories,
To him familiar, of ruder times,
Culled from the blind old poet Homer's page,
Or that more patient chronicler, the sage,
Yet tireless wanderer, old Herodotus ;
And sometimes he would trace the stormier scenes,
When first the good Reformists took their stand
Against the heresies of harlot Rome :
How like a star, placid, and clear, and bright,
Gentle Melancthon shed his scholar ray,
And Luther, in the council hall at Würms,
Waging firm battle for a purer creed.
Nursed in such lore, young Gillian had grown
A marvel and a beauty,—her presence shed
A gentleness so tranquil, and so soft,
Like a low footfall on some lawn of moss,

You heard not, yet perceived. No scene to her
But had its transcript in her memory,
Which she would summon back again at will,
As friends who ever brought some new delight.
Beside her father's manse the structure rose,
Beneath whose roof each Sabbath morn he gave
Promise, and consolation, and a truth,
To worshippers whose lives repaid his toil :
Around reposed the dead, tablet and mound,
With sometimes some more proud memorial,
Eloquent in the praise of those beneath,
Yet all at rest—the weepers and the wept.
Here, one bright morning in the early spring,
(Attentive to the labors of a boy,
Who, with sad interest in his fair young face,
Was planting violets round his sister's grave,
But newly gathered from the neighboring woods,)
A stranger stood before her with a bow :
“Lady, I think your name is Gillian,
And we are kindred—mine is Lionel,
A wandering artist-cousin, whom perchance,
Your father may have sometime told you of.”
He was a youth well statured, with a face

Tinged by warm southern suns to deeper hue,
Which gave a livelier lustre to his eye,
While frankness writ its truth upon his brow;
And Gillian gave him welcome with a smile,
That combated the blush she could not hide,
And though forsooth they had not met before,
At once were friends. "'Tis a strange place, 'mid graves,
To find relationship—yet am I glad
To meet with one my thoughts have often known;
But come and find a better welcome still,
There is our home, and it will bring new joy
To my old father's heart, your presence there."

Summer had wooed the last embrace of Spring,
And won her coronals, which now she wore
With the high pride of conquest and delight:
Life was abroad, blossom and insect-life,
The summer life that is so populous,
And loved the sweetliest by all human hearts.
Day dies so peacefully, and Twilight reigns
With such a dusky glory, and so long;
And Night, her empire rules with holiest brow,

Cradled and throned in star-magnificence ;
While Beauty lives through all, a Beauty still,
Changed but in hue—the bright, the soft, the deep.
Throughout this summer life, the cousins trod
A path of flowers, perfume-atmosphered,
Cousins no longer—they were lovers now
And, save its own, love asks no other tie.
How eloquent he told his Alpine tales
Of perils, when he scaled their misty heights,
Whose brows the sun first kissed to herald him ;
And how, when seated on some storm-rent crag,
He felt how poor a thing is man beside
The majesty of nature : vales, that smiled
In grateful tribute to the sheltering hills,
The homes of men, the simplest of their race,
Though born 'mid scenery the wild and grand.
And he would tell how, in his wanderings,
He felt a solitude, a wish to find
Some fond participator ; one in whom
His own enthusiasms might an echo meet,
For Joy hath no delight unless 'tis shared,
Alone, unwed, self-surfeited, it dies ;

While ever as he spoke, his eye sought hers,
In mute acknowledgment that she had been
The kindred soul for which his own had yearned.
Dark, earnest eyes were those of Lionel's,
That read you histories if you gazed on them,
Trifles in thought, yet sums in earnestness ;
And 'twas no marvel if that pleasant lore,
Breathed by the master passion in such guise,
Held Gillian a captive, pleased, and proud.
Ah ! Love's religion is the universe,
Its empire everywhere—it permeates
Through all the soul-existent, time and space—
And never yet the earth or waters closed
(Save the poor idiot's) above one breast,
Whose life had told a score of summers, but
Had Love's disciple been.

Once at the close
Of one of these warm, glowing, summer eves,
Hand clasped in hand, returning to the manse,
They paused to gaze upon the gray old spire
That in the moonlight gleamed so hoarily ;
Many a storm had spent its wrathfulness,

And sun, alternate, scorched the tempest's tears,
Yet scatheless still it stood—a conqueror,
Firm as the faith it symbolled. Earth did sleep
In Sabbath quietude beneath its wings,
And silence found a voice, that lingered long
A welcome dweller in their hearts—the while
Religion breathed a sanctity o'er all.
Almost unconsciously they moved away
Steeped to the lips in thoughts, before whose shrine,
Language is dim, and speech a mockery ;
When Gillian's voice upon their musings broke—
“Dear Lionel, your hand is strangely cold,
It was so warm but now—your cheek is pale,
You tremble, and the night is waning fast ;
I had forgot that we had strayed so long,
For time with you doth need no chronicler,
Its hours are moments—let us hasten home.”
“Nay Gillian 'tis naught ; I did but feel
A chill steal o'er me as we paused, beneath
The yew tree's shadow,—it will pass away ;
And you, my sweet physician, know you not
This heart throbs lightlier ever when near thee ?

Borrowing soft comfort from those looks of thine.”
Fond theories these, that might have suited well
For lovers’ converse—but the morrow came,
And Lionel forgot to greet the sun,
As he was wont each morn. Idly its beams
Stole thro’ the lattice pane to his wan cheek,
And played around his broken slumberings
Yet brought no smile to the pale sufferer’s lips.
Its ravage fearfully the fever sped,
As ’twere at once its victim might be won;
And when the twilight darkened round his couch,
It closed upon a wild and wandering brain.
The dark eyes glared with a strange lustrousness,
Gazing upon you vacantly, and long,
But with no consciousness or olden light.
Then came the hushed—the terrible repose—
The temples without throb—the pulse, all still—
Pallid the brow on which the dark curls rest
Like night upon some temple, proud and hoar :
You had not known if aught of life were left
Save when at intervals the lips would part,
And quiver with a sound that reached you not.

Ah ! patient watcher—gentle Gillian—
What hours of grief were thine—what shadows stole
Across thy brightly laden memories ;
Like to the Spring, when first she woos the rose
To ope beneath her bland, inconstant smile
Which, when its breast be bared, a breeze may come,
Before whose breath, its petals pale and droop.

How ! from the lonely couch where sickness lies,
We gather strength, the inward fortitude
That bids us bear, and yet forbids not hope ;
How soon the pause may come ! in God's most fair
And wonderful machine ; and find us close,
And tottering, on the terrible abyss,
Where thought remembers not, and life is still.
Near to the threshold of that veiled world,
Stood Lionel now. Day rested on the brow
Of holier night, who bade her stars burn low
Before the coming of her sun-crowned lord ;
While still through all, the heart beat faintly on,
As loth to leave the tenement it lit,
And loved, and filled, nor would leave lustreless.

The healer's art had failed—but in his stead,
The angel Hope stood by the nigh spent life,
And Gillian was her patient ministrant.
Oft in those vigils she would whisper forth—
“He is mine own, if love possession gives,
Though short the tenure, it hath been to me
The first awakening of a newer life,
Which made the old earth wear a gladder look;
I bless him for its brightness—yet methinks,
That I may never more retrace the paths
Our ramblings took; memory's eye recalls
Each tree, beneath whose shade we loit'ring stood,
Its green leaves trembling to the wind's caress,
Even as my heart to his more earnest vows.
Would I might tend him in some gayer task,
Though e'er so burdensome, so it but found
The flush of health once more upon his brow,
And called the olden lustre to his eye—
I am so helpless now—I may but hope—
That still is left—hope, watch, and weep, and pray.”
Thus would she often give her sorrows voice,
And silent stand beside his couch, and bend

In thought above him, while the tears would stream
Adown her cheeks unstartingly to his;
And she would kiss his brow, and sob "mine own!
My Lionel! mine own! O, wake to life!
Or, if the grave must needs thy manhood rob,
Let me too share it,—it will be with thee."

So morning once upon her vigils dawned,
Morn's calm and eloquently silent hour,
And found her at the open casement bowed
A suppliant in prayer. Before her, rose
The gray and distant hills, but faintly traced
Against the sky of which they seemed a part;
The "grand old woods" stretched far and widely out,
Elm, oak, and lordly pine—yet all so still—
Even the forest life, which earliest breaks
The sleeper's dream;—the lark had not yet sung
His lay matutinal.—Man had not gone
Forth to disturb with his unquiet heart,
The music of the hour, for music dwells
In silence, with her low and holiest tone.
No insect-hum stole thro' the upper air,

Nor white cloud flecked the sky—no time so meet,
For the upwinging of that maiden's prayer,
(Itself, a morning incense,) to her God.

“God of the morning hour, and vespèr shades !
Great Giver of the Beautiful ! to Thee,
The voice of Nature pleadeth now with mine,
For he was Nature's lover—look Thou down
On him, whom thou hast made image of Thee,
On him, whom chastening, Thou hast brought so low :
O ! bid once more the faltering heart repeat
The full health-throbbings of its former self,
Renew the currents of the sluggish veins,
And let the bright lamp of the intellect
Shine out with all its olden majesty.
List thou, O, Father ! this, the orphan's prayer ;
And give me back what Thou has made thine own
By love (of which Thou art the eternal type,)
The life that is incorporate with mine :
So may this heart's Gethsemane be calmed,
So may the souls we hold in trust of Thee,
Become a shrine, where morn, and noon, and night,

The offerings of our gratefulness be laid—
O, grant thou, Father! this, the orphan's prayer.”
The maiden's head drooped lower on her breast,
As if in commune with the God she prayed;
Her locks, disheveled by the long night's watch
Toyed with the wooings of the morning air;
And when, at times, her glance was upwards turned
It seemed an Angel's dwelling-place;—you read
In the calm gaze, of Faith's great earnestness,
Upon whose wings Hope, like the sunshine dwelt,
Bidding the soul some happier morrow wait:
God heard the prayer, and blessed the suppliant;
And mercy fled adown from mercy's seat,
In answer to that deep, abiding faith.

O! patient, pleasant, humanizing love,
The holiest mysteries of life are thine;
Around the altar where thy votaries kneel,
Some flowers amid the garland may be crushed,
Yet nothing so exalts, refines, like thee.
A voice hath whispered thee, sweet Gillian—
It was thy name—and in a moment thou

Art by the sufferer's side—do not embrace,
For Joy too wild hath sometimes fatal sweets,
And there will yet perchance be many hours,
Wherein thou mayst recount thy lonely nights,
Companioned only by thy love and hope ;
And thou mayst tell him then the stifled wish,
Which prompts thee now to clasp him to thy heart ;
And he will answer thee as best he should,
With kisses, and warm tears of gratitude.
His hand is raised, and he would speak—list thou,
For never sweeter sounds might wake for thee ;
The lyre hath no such music—it would soothe
Our thoughts, until they shaped themselves to dreams—
But those soft human words, they bear a tone
Richer than all earth's melodies, for they
Are silver bells, heralding forth a life.
“I saw thee kneel, beloved,—and I joined
The prayer voiced by those dear lips for me ;
Such music heard I in the transcendèd land
I have but now emerged from—and it came
From groups of angel bands, each one in form
And face like thee ; the same lute-breathings too,

When the notes died in whispers. Oh, fair dream !
Yet fairer waking,—for I live to find
Earth's beauty is not dead—that angels walk,
And watch, and hover round us, although clad
In mortal vesture : such an one wert thou,
Gifted with all their high-sphered attributes,—
But I ? what recompense is worthy thee ?
The heart is all too poor, or it should breathe
Forth thanks forever—yet is it all the wealth
I ever boasted,—and that now is thine.
O, Gillian ! life is an age too short
For the requital of thy faithfulness ;
And yet, the little, its allotment—left,
I do devote and dedicate to thee.”

Joy reigned once more within the pastor's home,
The hours flew idly by, the pleasant times
Of heart-communion were revived again ;
The shadow of the chastening past was there,
A silent friend, for ever whispering,
How life and love may sometimes only be
A dew-drop sparkle, and how both are held

In trust from Him, their high diviner lord :
So teaching that, whenever sorrow come,
It hath some noble use tho' learnt in pain,—
And that amid our wildly happiest hours,
When life and love seem loftiest pinnacled,
The heart should yield its grateful tribute forth,
And ask for wisdom to enjoy its wealth—
With some such precepts, and in some such words,
The good old master of the manse would speak,
To guide those orphan lovers—and they held
Counsel from him, in meetest reverence.
“She is too young as yet to be a bride,
My Gillian,”—the old man said—“and for this tour,
The last you meditate, I hold it best
You tarry not until the Autumn wanes;
But go my son, for so I deem you now,
Before another moon shall come to gloss
The rooks' dark plumage in the elm-tree tops :
You will be greatly missed—our home will wear
A saddened look till your return again,
But Lionel, in all thy wanderings,
On the broad waters of the treacherous deep,

The grave of bravest lives and truest hearts,
In the lone forest, when the glimmering light
Through the dark foliage from the peasant's hut,
Affords a hope of shelter for the night,
Or mid the glaciers of the giant Alps,
Let memory cast a retrospective glance
To this our quiet home—and dream that there
Thy name is daily uttered, daily blessed
In prayers, that linger long within the heart,
As tho' each wish should reach and dwell with thee,
Long ere its holy echoings had died
From out the faithful breast which gave it birth."

An Autumn eve—the last of many such—
Mute witnesses of low-voiced happy thoughts,
When hearts speak out their love-born mysteries,
Their passion and themselves, their only world.
How rests their gaze upon each favorite spot!
Those parting lovers ;—where the laurel path
Ends in the woodbine bower, ah ! there were vowed
The passionate vows of youth, and willing ears
Drank in the honeyed music ; but a step

Beneath yon Gothic archway, and they stand
Amid the daisied mounds, which greenly roof
Life's last abodes; here have they often paused,
And imaged to themselves a peaceful life,
And peaceful rest with those who sleep below:
Such ever are the opening dreams of love,
And such the golden vista, fancy-wove.
The full orb'd moon, as in the olden time,
Lit up the quiet landscape—yet she seemed,
As with a saddened interest to look down,
Conscious that two in her dominion mourned;
While, in fair contrast rose the cross-crowned spire,
Pointing like Hope, to those desponding hearts.

O'er all life's dreams, its wildest joy and bliss,
The shadow-monitor in silence stalks—
His chill gray palm descending, even while
We deem the goal of happiness be won.
A rebel with a crown within his grasp,
Won by hard conquest and no gentle deeds,
Beholds the tide of fortune ebb, and he
A captive, chained, to grace the conqueror's car:
An exile, with his native shore in sight,

Rich with the gathered wealth of many a land,
Dreaming of home, hears not the treacherous deep
Roar angrily unto the tempest's wrath,
Yet ere the day be done, his form may press
The white and wave-ribbed sands, his voice ascend
In thankful prayer that, though his wealth be gone,
Still life remains unto the shipwrecked man:
A child, the favorite of all the band,
With years of promise writ upon his brow,—
In whom the glories of his line will live
With added lustre,—so the fond sire deems—
Nor sees the shadow-warning, till his boy
Be parted from him for the better land.
And so with all—grief dwells in every cup,
But yet I ween, than parting hearts of love,
No touching human sorrow half so sad.
So Gillian felt, when on the morrow morn
No greeting met her from the accustomed lip,
Or eager footstep waited on the lawn:
Beseemed some flower from her path had gone,
Whose fragrant breath each morn saluted her;
A sunbeam vanished from her daily life,
And in its track, passed out the golden hours.

Wearily dragged the little household tasks,
Which erst had met with such a quick dispatch ;
Her light step tripped less lightly, as she went
Her frequent rounds amid the village poor ;
While they with chaste and delicate feelings, born
Of angels' impress—found as oft beneath
The russet mantle as the ermine robe—
Noted the sad lines on her brow, and yet
In kind solicitude had questioned not.
She came alone with all her little gifts,
Her glad, consoling scripture truths, and they,
Grateful recipients of her bounty, knew
That he, the dark-eyed stranger, lingered not
As he was wont to do, beside the porch,
While she her mercy-laden mission sped :
The history of her love was known to all—
And many a prayer from those lowly homes,
Rose for the welfare of the pastor's child.

A rich, October noon—a golden brown
O'er all the woods—a busy insect-hum—
A tremulous whispering of falling leaves—
A stream, meandering to the dreamy noise

Of its own babbling music—here and there
On either bank, a birch's pleasant shade,
Or willow's wooing shelter ; just a spot,
Formed for the dreamer's solitude, to win
Rose-tinted hours from the gray dial, Life.
In mood accordant with the happy scene,
In dreamy attitude, with dreamy thoughts,
And visions, born of far-off scenes and lands,
The gentle hearted Gillian reclines
Beneath those forest shadows : in her hand,
An open letter from the well-beloved,
Full of the impulses of ardent youth,
Of passion, round its object-worship wreathing
Garlands of poet-cloquence—sweet words
Which only lovers weave, and only feel—
Vows, that were vowed a thousand times before,
Yet never lose their sweetness ; be they writ
In pages manifold, or softliest breathed,
Repeated e'er so oft, still happy ears
Convey the happier music to the heart.
Many a maiden, loving, and betrothed,
Can well remember how in eager haste,
With breath half stayed, she tore the seal apart

That hid love's first epistle from her eye ;
Remember well how first 'twas hasty conned,
And thrice re-read, and thrice re-read again,—
How leapt the young blood, crimsoning o'er the cheek,
Then paled beneath the heart's tumultuous throb,
And left a happy brooding in the soul :
How pausing over lines so fondly writ,
So full of lover-earnestness and trust,
She blessed the distant scribe, and kissed the scroll.
Many a maiden, loving and beloved,
Had wept sweet tears of joy as Gillian then,
Had kissed the scroll in grateful recompense,
And wandering homeward, would have sighed with her—
“ O faithful heart ! mine too shall keep its truth.”

The long, long winter passed, enlivened oft
With happy tidings of the wanderer's fate ;
He lingered now upon the Asian shore,
Amid the scenes wherein the Saviour lived,
Beside the paths where our Redeemer trod ;
On Olive's glorious mount, by Kedron's brook,
Around the Garden where our Lord received

The Judas kiss ; and by the prophet's tombs,
Siloam's pool, Jehoshaphat's broad vale,
In every spot made holy thro' all time,
Where He, the wisest of all human-kind,
Had passed or sojourned. Ah, happy life !
Happier methinks than even quiet love,
Enjoyed in some domestic rural home
With nature's soft, poetic whisperings,
Through the leaf-droppings of the autumn boughs :
Though this be happiness, the genial soil
Wherein all human life-contentment dwells,—
Yet 'tis a joy supremest, to have dwelt
Amid the favored land's inspiring scenes,
Where every mountain's voice, and valley's sigh,
Told of the Man of Sorrows' once abode.

Again, another shadow passed across
The dial of sweet Gillian's daily life ;
Less frequent came the missives, which contained
The treasure and the wealth of all her heart ;
The thousand airy nothings which make up
The sum and substance of all human love :

And darker grew the shadows on her brow,
And often passed the rose-tint from her cheek,
Which it had been so oft his wont to praise.
Many a week would frequent interlapse
Ere yet a letter came—and even then,
The words seemed studied, writ as with reserve;
Not as of old, with all the warmth, the fire
Of love's most passionate ardor—in their stead,
A tone, impassive—reasonings, which but serve
To mar the blossom true affection lights.
Many a time, in the long hours of night,
She would recur to all his former vows,
And sigh, as if she felt some fatal truth—
“Am I forgotten, and is this the goal
Tow'rd which my hopes of happiness had yearned?
Now drooping round me with a funeral chill.
O star! which shinest down on him and me,
I would that thou couldst give me tidings now,—
I would forego the summer of my life
To be for one short hour so near to thee,
That I might gaze, and know my fate at once.
I may not long endure this wild suspense,
This sickening of the heart—I scarce can look

With kindness on my fond old father's face,
But that each furrowed lineament would seem
To be the telltale of my hastening doom :
Whate'er it be, whether for good or ill,
God ! in thy mercy, bid the knowledge come."

The knowledge came—the truth that must be learnt,
However borne—it spoke of him, as one
For whom forgiveness was forever closed
Within the hearts where he would most have dwelt :
He had had trials—many a bitter task,
To combat and surmount, and oftentimes
Had passed the ordeal, fond and faithful still ;—
But in that hour when most he felt assured
No other image e'er could step between,
And chase away his soul's pledged idol-choice—
"I stood alone, at eventide," he said—
"Upon the broad and columned plain, which marks
Palmyra's rise and fall ; and like a child,
Or devotee entranced, forgot the hours
In pondering o'er those relics of the past.
The night, and slumber on my musings fell,
And when I woke—why did I ever wake !—

There were dark eyes, from under turbaned brows,
Gleamed strangely on me—curtained round me, hung
In tentlike form, shawls of all gorgeous hues,
And there, to minister to all my wants,
Domestics knelt, and spake in kindly tones.
Then came a voice, to herald the approach
Of one, whose presence soon resolved my doubts,
For we had met in other lands before.
She was a daughter of patrician birth,
A child of Italy—and like her clime,
Inspired, and passionate. It had been her choice
To travel or to loiter, as it pleased
An only brother's whim ; and he, poor youth !
Was sick and crippled. She it was, whom once
I met at nightfall in a Switzer's hut,
In one of Switzerland's most scenic vales ;
And there we formed an art-companionship ;
She loved the artist's calling, and each morn
Together, we would sketch on Alpine slopes,
The beauties of each hour : there too, I learnt
How great the sacrifice she daily made,
The patient care, the warmth affectionate,
With which she watched this brother whom she loved.

At length we parted—I will frankly own,
On both sides with regret—with more perchance
On hers, than mine—for I had sometimes thought,
Another sentiment would steal across
Her virgin heart, and mantle o'er her cheek.
Now, from her lips I learnt how first she found
My prostrate form beside a column's base ;
On my scorched brow still played the noonday sun,
Nor word or sound came from my blistered lips
In answer to her kind, yet sad salute.
Again the fever reigned, and raged, and sped,
As once before, Oh Gillian ! when you
Became the guardian angel of my life.
And so, within this shawl-made tent I lay,
And lingered on through many a dragging week
Watched by my patient nurse. I know not how,
Our converse first began—but once she spake—
It was of love, and all its mysteries,
The holiness which shrouds its very name,
The great heart-longings which its empire rules ;
And then she told—but with a faltering voice,
As conscious of her strange confessioning,

What time her young affection lit on me,
When in those Alpine solitudes we strayed :
And how the fostered passion daily grew
Through the long interval, until we met
Once more amid Palmyra's ruined halls.
This little history of her love she told
So artless and confidingly—I wept—
Bowed with conflicting passions, for I felt
My fond and truly plighted love to thee,
My soul's intense, full gratitude to her.
And when she placed her hand upon my brow,
And asked my sorrow's cause, and sued to share
And be participator in my grief ;
I yielded to the impulse of the hour,
And in the mutual vows we there exchanged,
Forgot my troth to thee. I write from Italy,
Beneath the palace roof where we are wed—
Her crippled brother sitting at our side ;
My full confession of the past is made,
And Irene bids me ask forgiveness, from
The distant sister (as she calls you now)
Whom deeply, but unconsciously she wronged.

For me, I feel within your woman's heart
A voice will echo mercy—for I know
That never yet the meanest thing on earth,
However abject, or however false,
Could sue for pardon there and plead in vain."

But Gillian did not, as most maidens do,
When love-forsaken, die of broken heart ;
The early teachings of her father's lore,
The peace which dwelleth in our Christian creed,
And blossoms round the desolate and sad,
Came with the breath of healing on its wings.
True was that record of her once betrothed,
That one so good must needs be merciful ;
She had forgiven—and one pleasant morn,
A morn of Italy, when summer reigns,
A letter came, and on the leaf was writ—
"Unto my sister Irene." Thus it ran—
"Be happy, sister, in your sunny land—
Happy with him whom you have loved so well,
And succored in the desert ; he deserves
(For all his little frailties unto me)

To have some noble heart whereon to rest,
And such I feel is yours. I will pray,
That flowers ever may bestrew your paths,
And blessings ever on your footsteps wait :
Be happy, sister, in your sunny land.”
Tears fell upon the kindly written page,
And Irene kissed it with a sister’s kiss,
And sighed—“ O, lofty soul ! O, woman-queen !
The Earth has Angels still—and thou art one ! ”

THE SISTERS.

“SISTER, look forth ! how gorgeously,
The sunbeams tint yon hill ;
All nature resting like a dream,
On forest, steep, and rill.

How often, in the long days past !
I've watched his fading fire ;
So had we formed an union, like
The Psalmist with his lyre.

I learned and loved the greater Life,
Which beamed and shone thro' him ;
Glad rays, that seemed like tribute songs
Of low-voiced seraphim.

My bird is pining—he hath not
Yet sung his good-night lay ;
Ah ! he and I, like yonder sun,
Ere long must pass away.

It is not that I weep to leave
The green and glorious earth,
For well I know the path of Life
Death waylays from our birth.

But that I leave behind me one,
Himself a child of song ;
Brave minstrel of the humblest right,
Avenger of the wrong.

Think you another heart may wear
Smiles, that were only mine ;
Ah, Love ! thy grave should ever be
Two hearts' united shrine.

Kind sister, read me once again,
His last and gentlest words;
And thou, poor heart! awake no more
Thy long responsive chords.

I should have other feelings now,
The holy, and the deep;
Sweet prayers, whereon the fainting soul
May enter to its sleep.

O Life!—O Love! life's better part—
I feel thy truth can save!
Thus pure, thus unalloyed with earth,
Love lives beyond the grave."

The shadows which the sunset cast,
Were deepening o'er the land,
While from the glass of human life
There passed another sand.

A poet lost his young beloved,
A sire his gifted child,—
Deep was that kind young sister's grief,
Deep, though less loud and wild.

I hold it as a pleasant thought,
The happiest time to die,
Is on a summer eve—when earth
Sends forth to Heaven, her sigh.

When all the forest life is still,
The birds have hushed their lay;
The fittest and the holiest time
For life to pass away.

* * * * *

The summer came again—and she
Who watched that sister fade,
The younger, and the lovelier one,
Was now herself a shade.

The eyes were still as eloquent
As lustrous, and as blue,
But the pale hand, you might have seen
Almost the sunlight through.

No minstrel ever told to her
The trite and olden story,
How song sometimes may win young hearts,
As well as warrior glory.

The master passion had not made
Of her young heart, a captive ;
And yet she was, of all we knew,
For love, the most adaptive.

* * *

The worldliest man, when by her side,
She was so truthful hearted,
Would feel that innocence again,
From which his youth had parted.

The flatterer, when he met her gaze,
Forgot his honeyed speech;
He read upon her brow the thoughts
Life's loftier virtues teach.

I know not why it should have been,
Yet tears were longer wept—
Wept longer, and by manlier hearts,
Than when her sister slept.

And she hath left a void, which time
May not again replace;
For there are griefs we sometimes shrine,
And wish not to efface.

The sunset's purple lingerings,
Caught not her last low words,
But with his greeting rays she died,
The matin tones of birds.

In life they loved the sun—in death,
His happiest hues did borrow;
Unto the first, he sighed—Good night!
Unto the last—Good morrow!

SIR JOHN FRANKLIN.

THEY weep for thee in England's lordly halls,
By ingle-sides, through all the pleasant land:
A people's anthem hath ascended up
In one loud, solemn, organ-voicèd swell—
That He, who stills the waves, and bids the gale
Deal gently with the adventurous voyager,
May guide thee back, thou hope of many hearts.

Sorrow is selfish—sympathy alone
Holds soul-dominion o'er the empire life—
Her path, all nobleness and angel-deeds:
Fair is her scroll, whose gold-engraven words,
Earth's future sons will joy to contemplate—
How the new world, all former feuds forgot,
Remembering only one great common cause—
Launched forth her vessels on the stormy deep,
In quest of England's absent mariner.

Long may the story of that courtesy,
That prince-munificence of one great heart,
Dwell, greenly ever, in the minds of men:
So, when the Future gathers from the Past
Her records of the mighty, she may pause
In wrapt entrancement o'er thy name—Grinnell.*

Sweet Hope! bright visioned Hope! ah! but for thee,
The mourner had been desolate or dead:
The sunbeams are thy ministers—the stars,
Thy watchful kinsmen—they can whisper thee,
Of one who, through the long hours of the night
Doth patient gaze until their fires grow dim—
Her thoughts far wandering mid Arctic seas,
Where midnight sees the sun with softened rays
Light up the hills of everlasting ice.
Many a dove-winged prayer that gentle heart

* HENRY GRINNELL, Esq., a merchant of New York; who, at his own expense, and with a munificence and liberality that has no parallel, purchased and fitted out two vessels, the *Advance* and *Rescue*, and sent them on the noble mission of attempting the discovery of Sir John Franklin.

Hath sped for him, her bosom's absent lord,
And they, the gallant and the brave, who share
The perils of his ice-girt solitude;
Many a stately ship from England's shores,
The waters of those silent seas have stirred,
Unchallenged by the voices of the lost.
Death only spake of life;—the warm young life
He loves to ravage. On a grassy slope,*
Where the bright wind-flowers bow beneath the sun,
And scarlet poppies peep through greenest moss,
Three tablets tell the common human tale:
High-souled, adventurous hearts, who followed on,
Fearless, where'er their ocean-chieftan led.
Yet there they sleep—the long, unwaking sleep,
That hath nor pause, nor action,—at their head,
The simple records of their name and home.

And here the lost ones came, and hence they went—
But whither? Vain was each stone upturned,

* Beachy Island, where the graves of three of Sir John's crew were discovered.

Each nook explored along the streamlet's bank,
The cliff's smooth base had no rude-graven name,
No seaman's fancy there forgot the hours
In grotesque carvings or inscriptions quaint,
Where wistful eyes might some memorial glean
Of the then future looming to their thoughts.
Tidingless all,—if yet they linger on,
Patient, by frozen barriers enclosed,
Or, if amid impinging icebergs crushed,
Their fate, a mystery—a world's regret.

O Thou ! Great Ruler of the seas ! to whom
Each hair is numbered, known the sparrow's fall,
Preserve, restore, our absent mariners ;
Heal up the bleeding hearts that long have mourned,
Yet never faltered from their trust in Thee ;
So, when we list their wondrous narrative,
Of perils that had once been fabulous,
Our thoughts may back in silent prayer revert
To Thee, the fountain of all Christian Hope.

THE BURIAL AT SEA.

It was a wild and solemn scene,
The gale its wrath had spent;
And slowly, as from late fatigue,
The laboring vessel went.

The waves, their weird and mountain shapes
Upon the horizon drew,
And over all the high noon cast
The tropic's sultry hue.

There's wailing, and a woman's voice
High o'er the rest is heard;
The groanings of a troubled heart
By deepest passion stirred.

.

Death had been there—the leveler,
Before whose scythe we bow,
And morning found the fatal seal
Upon her darling's brow.

Through many a long and lonely night
She watched beside his bed ;
And listened to the wild wave's song,
The seaman's measured tread.

While Hope, the enchantress, whispered her
Sweet visions, (ah, too wild !)
Of summer climes that should restore
The lost bloom of her child.

He was her treasure—all that made
Her care to greet the sun ;
And oh ! the mortal agony
To know that he was gone.

That never more his smile should greet
The morning's earliest beam ;
How drearily the future looked !
The past—how like a dream !

Around the capstan stood the crew,
The few short prayers were read ;
And sadly to the vessel's side
They bore the early dead.

Then rose the prayer—"We commit
Our brother to the deep"—
Poor broken-hearted mother ! thou
Wouldst find it bliss to weep.

'Twas kind in that old mariner,
To bear thee from the spot,
Where, lingering yet, thine eye had caught
A sight were best forgot.

We gazed with ill-timed eagerness,
To watch the corpse go down,
There in its ocean grave to wait
The coming and the crown.

But lo ! the parted waves closed not
Above that shrouded form ;
It stood erect,* as though to brave
The sunshine and the storm.

And wonder whitened many a cheek
That fear had never blanched,
To know if 'twere of mortal mould,
They from their ship had launched.

* An occurrence of this kind took place on a voyage from Belfast to Quebec, on account of there not being sufficient weight to sink the body.

So suddenly the waters stilled,
The sails flapped to and fro;
While the soft winds sang a requiem
In whispers faint and low.

Far in our wake the current bears
That spectral shape away;
Mute voyager! on what lone isle
Wilt thou unburied lay?

And many a time, in dreams that flit
Across our troubled sleep,
That floating corpse will stare us, like
A sea-mark on the deep.

SUNSET IN THE TROPICS:

“A thing of beauty is a joy forever,
Its loveliness increases.”

Keats.

'TIS so with sunsets; most of all, with those
That in the tropics daze the gazer's eye:
No cattle there come lowing from the lea;
No song-birds trill their fairy-like adieus;
No cottage homes grace flower-bespangled plains,
No deepening shadows rest on forests old;
Nor, winging o'er the scene his dusky flight,
The rook, belated, seeks his commonwealth.
But a soft sky of a most matchless blue,
An ocean circle, whose gold-tinted waves
Recede, as 'twere, from their own loveliness,

And a fair ship, freighted with human hearts,
Ploughing her course to the far Eastern world.
O, wondrous beauty ! how across the main
The sun-god sheds a track of mellowing light !
A fond good-night salute to what he loves.
While, fairer still, clouds myriad-shaped appear,
Lovely of hue, and dream-like in their forms,
Such as but once to see, would live for aye,
Enshrined mid memory's sweet remembrances :
Bending o'er all white-fleckèd clouds outspread
Like golden-fleecèd sheep ranging o'er purple hills.
O, for the limner's skill ! that I might trace
What fancy pictures now in yonder clouds ;
A Grecian landscape, with the Ephesian arch,
Its fissures, weeds, and parasitic moss,
And fallen fragments strewn around its base :
Our lips are voiceless, eloquence is mute,
And the heart pulsates with a quicker throb,
As with strained eyes and wonderment we view
The sun, midway between its portals set.
We turn and sigh as for a glory gone,
Wishing that life had only such regrets,

And one such visitant to solace them,
As yonder moon, that with her pleasant face
Comes gaily greeting now, robed for her sapphire
reign.

THE DYING SWEDE.

“I feel that life is waning fast,
And, comrade, I would gaze
Once more upon the sea and sky,
The deepening sunset’s rays :

“So bear me softly to the deck,
I’m too feeble now
To scamper there as once my wont,
Health bronzed on check and brow.

“How gaily rings each voice ! all hearts
Are gleeful—mine alone,
Wrung by sad fever-woven thoughts,
Has no responsive tone.

“The white sails, how they bathe themselves
In the cheery golden light;
Like a beauty decked for conquest
On some royal gala night.

“And the breeze it hath a music
Waking old forgotten chords,
Like the moaning of the pines that crown
The banks of our fiords.

“Alas! this wild pursuit of wealth—
How many a home can tell!
Of loved ones who its threshold passed,
The legion list to swell.

“The bridegroom left his bride, ere yet
Joy’s warm young flush was o’er;
The lover left his vows unsaid,
To seek the golden shore.

“I, too, had health, hope, all wherewith
The adventurous spirit fills,
“Who would not haste where fortune smiles,
Amid the golden hills?”

“Our last farewells were faltered forth,
The fond adieus of youth—
Forgive me, comrade, that I weep,—
They were the last in truth.”

“My father plies the fisher’s trade
Our rugged coasts along;
There, Sea! bid thou a wavelet speed,
With this, life’s parting song.

“When the light ripples kiss the sands,
The smooth beach-pebbles lave,
Then whisper how his eldest born
Found ’neath thy breast a grave.

“My first young dream of waking life
Was gazing forth on thee,
The name my lips first learned to voice,
Was thine, O sounding Sea !

“And with thy murmurs in mine ear,
All senses wavering, fade—
Ah ! lightly may the south gale blow
Where my last rest is made.”

The eyes flashed forth a moment, as
For some new glory won ;
Then heavily the head drooped down—
The dream of life was done.

THE GREAT OF '52.

“FAREWELL to thee Old Year!

Thousands have passed unto the silent shore
Where thou art wending. I have wept o'er all,
And hymned for each a low and solemn dirge,
As I would thee; but 'tis no common chant
That should pass out with thee, O parting Year!
Earth's sons have lost their bravest and their best—
No simple catalogue of honest hearts,
Wept by a kindred few; no lesser stars,
Each in their own particular circle, bright;
But they whose names have long been household
words,
Whom men, now middle-aged, revered in youth,
Whose audience was nations, and the globe

Their answerer and applauder. First to thee—
For thou the first didst take thy leave of us,
O, God-like minded CLAY! How well thy life !
Through all its phases, virtue idealized,
Chaste, simple, and severe as Grecian art.
Title, or gift, ne'er wooed thee from the path
Thine honor traced thee—and for he who dared
'Rather be right than President'—no throne or seat,
Republics, empires, kingdoms might bestow,
But would from him an added grace receive.
Another, full of years—a hero-prince,
And ripe with honors, passed adown the stream :
Gloom fell on Britain's isle, and tears were shed
By manliest hearts above the soldier's bier ;
He was their bulwark, iron in frame and will,
'Sans peur et sans reproche;' and on the scroll
Where history her warrior column rears,
Amid the deathless names engraven there,
None greater homage ask than WELLINGTON.
And thou ! who died so late—so widely mourned—
Thy country stood aghast at its great loss ;

Last of the great triumvirate,* but first
In lore and eloquence. Ah, years! long years!
Years lapsing into centuries will pass,
Ere men shall 'look upon his like again.'
There went a voice of wailing through the land,
As some great ruin had o'ertaken all;
The winds hung stirless in the midway air,
And the clouds spread above them like a pall;
The moon's bright majesty was veiled,—the stars
Shone with a dimmer light,—and as I passed
Across the bosom of his country's lakes,
Mine own face startled me,—it looked so wan.
Never again through Marshfield's peaceful shades
His footfall shall resound—never again,
Shall wondering senates hang upon those tones
Of more than mortal eloquence and fire.
Thy history is thy country's—she will twine
The name of WEBSTER proudly with her own.”
So sang the sun ere lingeringly he set,—
The sea took up the tone, and the freed winds
Joined in the dirge above the dying year.

* CALHOUN, CLAY, and WEBSTER.

Far, far into the night, their farewells rang,
And fainter grew their sad wild melody ;
'Twas like the last notes of the expiring swan,
The burden still—"Farewell to thee, Old Year !"

MY LEAH.

Poets have their visions all,
Earthborn and divine ;
Maidens who their hearts enthrall,
Such an one was mine.
It was on a starlight eve,
Starlight is the fairest
Time to commune with the lore,
Breathed by hearts recounting o'er
Passion-vows, the rarest.
We had wandered through the wood,
Much we loved its solitude,
Out upon the open plain,
Where the wavy grasses reign,
On unto the ocean's shore,
Hand in hand, still telling o'er
How earth's loving sons adore. }

She was fair, my gentle Leah,
Radiant as a God's idea ;
On her forehead beamed a star,
Bright as Indian jewels are,
Crescent-shaped, and rainbow-tinted,
Like sun-rays from the rock-brows glinted ;
And a sapphire zone embraced
Gathered foldings at her waist ;
On her small white feet she wore
Sandals, like the maids of yore ;
Summer midnight was her eye,
Midnight with her clearest sky,
Midnight, when the moon is gone
Other worlds to shine upon ;
And her dark embrownèd tresses,
Seemed to woo the stars' caresses ;
She was beautiful, my Leah,
Bright as is a God's idea.

Scarce a moon, that we had known
We had been so long alone,
Wandering on, yet never meeting,
Soul with soul on instant, greeting,

As we had in youth been parted,
Tracing desert paths, uncharted ;
Searching each the beacon goal
Lit within a kindred soul.
Long we talked of ages gone,
Ages where the mighty shone ;
How that love was victor then,
Over Gods, and over men.
How tremulous and fond a joy,
Was Dian's for the shepherd boy,
How sported through the summer day,
Venus with young Adonais,
And Echo pining silently
For the fair Narcissus' sigh ;
Up and down the golden sands,
Wandering still with claspèd hands,
Still recounting, o'er and o'er,
How Gods, like mortals, loved of yore.

Once she whispered—"I have heard
Of a radiant-plumaged bird,

Who the nights of summer made
Cheerful with his serenade ;
Oft the watchers of the night
Listened to that wild delight,
Trancèd lovers hushed their sighs
When they heard his melodies :
He had dared to woo a star,
In the train of Juno's car,
As her rays did nightly shine
On the green wood's monarch pine,
Where he trilled his lonely lay
To his star-love far away.
Oftentimes the queen had caught
Sounds of music beauty-fraught,
And she staid her train to know
' If 't were they who warbled so,
Or some child of earth below.' }

Then the star-belovèd spake—
' Queen, he sings them for my sake ;
He is but a forest bird,
Whose wild melodies you heard,

Yet he boasts a beauty rare,
Fairest of a race, all fair—
And he hath so constant been,
That I love him—kind my queen.'

'If you love him, glide adown
Gently to the mountain's crown,
He will bear thee to his home
'Neath some arching forest dome;
And our thoughts will often be
Of thy bridegroom bird and thee—
For it glads me well to see
Love that wins by constancy.'

And the story runs—that they,
Freed from taint of mortal clay,
Wander thro' the world at will,
One high mission to fulfill,—
That wherever love has birth
In the faithful breasts of earth,
There they rear an idol-shrine
To the passion, still divine,

Graving on its templed thrones
Truthful words, in hopeful tones ;
And the hearts, whose priests they are,
Bless the prophet, bird and star."

She was beautiful, my Leah,
Radiant as a God's idea—
Lute-like that low voice of hers,
Meet for altar-worshippers ;
And her glance, the houris—they
Never saw such bright orbs play.
Oft, unbidden, thoughts would come,
That she had some other home,—
Haply 'mid the sister train,
Who attend Queen Juno's reign,
Where she learnt that legend old
She had now so aptly told ;
Or with loftier angels dwelling,
Mid their own, her voice excelling.
Suddenly, while wandering on,
From the deep arose a song—
Never mortal melody
Like to that could chanted be ;

For beyond all human ken,
Were the sounds forth ringing then :
And the many-tinted shells
 On the shore bestrewn,
From their pearl-festoonèd cells,
Low, Eolian music wells
 To the wilder tune.

Meseemed I had nor sense, nor motion,
Listening to that chanting ocean ;
Nor the trace, nor power of thought,
Save the posture, instinct taught,
There to kneel upon the sands
Voiceless, with upraisèd hands,
Mutely gazing o'er the sea
Whence arose that harmony.
Faintly to mine ear would come
Sounds of " Welcome ! Welcome home !
Welcome ! Welcome to the Bride !
From her earth-born lover's side."
This the burden seemed to be
Of their unseen revelry.

Morning lit the distant hills
Ere my soul awoke,
And I started at the sounds
From mine own lips broke :
I was there, alone ! alone !
She my dream-loved bride was gone.

Poets have their visions all—
Earth-born and divine,
Maidens who their hearts enthrall—
Such an one was mine ;
And it were too rude a pain,
Thus to woo, and lose again.
She is gone, my soul's idea—
Lost, my star-crescented Leah.

THIRST.

CALM, calm, eternal calm ! No ripple breaks
The fearful smoothness of that silent sea ;
The sky is cloudless—not the faintest breeze,
Such as might stir an infant's silken hair,
Or ruffle the light bosom of a rose.
The sun, the pitiless sun, as 'twere in wrath,
Pours down his rays with fierce intensity,
Streaming with scorching lines thro' many a seam
And widening gap of yon ill-fated ship ;
Yet life is there, long lingering, patient life,
That clings to earth with such tenacity ;
No comrade yet, more fortunate than the rest,
Hath sighed his sorrows with his life away,

Breaking the stillness of that dreary waste,
In bubbles o'er him as his corse went down.

The days—they have not numbered them, since first
The spent winds left them in their solitude ;
Hope was young, vigorous then, and every eye
Closed with a prayer the morrow's dawn would break
Breezily round them ; but hope itself died out,
And passionless despair assumed its place ;
Their frames would thrill with a strange agony
To gaze upon their food—and once they bade,
(In tones as harsh as their faint utterance might,)
The boy return with the untasted meal.
Poor child ! he looked so piteous and wan,
His large eyes oped in such sad wonderment
To hear rebuke, where he had thought a smile
Would be his guerdon ;—but he came no more—
Death was far kinder than the elements,
And stole across him gently as he knelt
To pray for those who chid him. How they clutched
With miser-grasp, the vial that contained
Their scanty water, daily meted out,

And each day less ; holding it to their lips,
And sucking, as the very glass itself
Beneath their burning breath would liquefy.

No curse was heard—e'en prayer itself had ceased,
When their boy-friend had died. Dull apathy
Reigned sullen over all : they recked not how
The hours passed on—or when the night closed in,
Or when the morning broke—to them it brought
No happier morrow ; life was nearly done,
And yet it waned so slow they felt it not,
Or it may be existence is not life.

This could not last forever—and at length,
When their last drop of water had been drained,
When he who labored to o'erturn the tank
For one draught more, died in the effort,—
And they had looked into each other's eyes,
Gazing their mute farewells—there came a shade,
Dimming the sunlight which had glared so long
In mockery round them. Sunshine may be dear,
Welcomed and worshipped by earth's millions, yet

Never I ween brought rapture so intense,
As when the advancing cloud its glories veiled.

Ah! once again the long-gone, wandering breeze
Plays through the tangles of their matted hair;
And life returns, and energy recalls
Somewhat the spirit of its former self.
How they sprang forth! handling each rope, to try
If strength were left them yet to bend a sail:
And one—alas! that joy should madden so,
Leapt with a frantic bound into the sea.
The bleached sails swell before the gathering wind
Like a full-bosomed beauty—while the deep
Laughs with the noise its roughening waters make;
And listen to the sound, more welcome still,
The rain down-pattering on the gaping deck.
O joy! intense, delirious, gasping joy!
Poets may laud the full bowl, nectar-brimmed,
For gods and heroes,—and the grape may flush
The cheek of Age with Youth's warm healthfulness;
But Nature never gave from all her founts,
One draught so sweet, so redolent of life,

As that cloud vintage to those fainting hearts.
The night closed darkly, and the tempest roared
Joyously to their ears; while he, their chief,
In silence mused above the unwritten log,
Whose blankness was itself a history;
And where the records of that fearful time
Should stand for inquest—there he traced a prayer,
A sailor's offering to the sailor's God.

L. E. L.*

A loved, a fair, a fadeless name,
Is on yon marble traced ;
The last recording stone of one
So gifted and so graced.
Alas ! that heart perforce must tell
Thy early fate—poor L. E. L.

The fairest page in storied song
Had ever been thine own ;
Man's bold achievements, woman's faith,
And love's most holy tone :
What bard like thee hath sung so well
Our life's best passion, L. E. L. ?

* LETITIA ELIZABETH LANDON, the poetess, died at Cape Coast Castle, on the coast of Africa, where her husband (Major Maclean) was Governor.

How often have we bent in tears !

Thy spirit-dreams above,
Sweet Ethel Churchill's sorrowings,
And Walter Maynard's love ;
As murmurs in some sea-wreathed shell,
Thy sweet lays echo, L. E. L.

Thou wert not with us long, to glad,
With thy sweet themes, our toil ;
Yet deep-souled wishes blessed thy home
Upon that foreign soil :
Far from thine own fair land to dwell—
How much we miss thee, L. E. L. !

And yet beneath our English sky
Thy fate had best been met ;
Home, ancestry, and friends have ties,
Such souls as thine regret.
So young to bid the world farewell—
How many loved thee, L. E. L. !

Beyond the broad Atlantic sea,
Strange hands have shaped thy grave,
Ah! long the dream, and long the sleep,
Beside thine own blue wave;
Yet memory in her holiest cell
Retains thine image, L. E. L.

THE GUEST OF '55.

BESIDE the portals of the tomb of years,
An aged wanderer stood, his travel done,
His mantle on the foot-worn threshold cast,
Sorrow's broad impress on his dying brow.
"I wait," he said, "a guest, before I pass
To join my brethren in the shadowy realm."
And ere the words were done, lo! up the vale,
With lines of radiance on his youthful face,
With glorious step and mien, and beauty, born
Of hope's presaging thoughts, the stranger came,
An olive branch around his temples wreathed.
"I greet thee, Father, with the kiss of peace;
I greet thee with the olive on my brow,
I greet thee with a happier morrow's dawn.

But why look'st thou so sad? As if to dim
This brilliant promise of my opening reign.
Give me thy counsel, it may chance arrest
A swerving footstep or unsteady hand;
For well you know 'tis from the past we call
That wisdom which the better future guides."

"A moment, Son, ere yet these portals close,
Expectant of their time to ope for thee,
And I will run a sad, dark history through,
Of deeds of sorrow in mine annals done:—
I see a legion host in armed array,
Encamped before a leaguered city's walls—
Two nations there, which erst in enmity,
Two nations there, now in fair amity,
Grasping the sword, and making common cause.
War's terrible shout its daily echo rings,
And battle-fields strew the blood-soddened earth;
Brave hearts have drawn their last long sighs of life,
And they who died not in the battle's tide,
Toil, famine, and disease have conquered since.

I see the chamber where a despot lies,
Lord of a million slaves, no one of whom
Might for a moment make one throe the less,
The sufferer's agony. Swiftly o'er his brain
The pageant moves of his ambitious life,
Records of crime, and unrelenting hate,
Aggression, conquest, howsoe'er obtained,
Exiles footweary on Siberia's track :
Vain now are all regrets—no comfort springs,
Born out of great, or mercy-laden deeds ;
A greater ukase hath been issued forth
Than ever came from his tyrannic will ;
Death's signet lies upon the attainted brow,
And Freedom draws once more the breath of hope,
As forth she sighs—' the Eagle's swoop is low.'

I see the chamber where a Hero lies,—
(Britannia's Chieftain, leader of the host ;)
Calm, placid as an infant's is *his* sleep,
No broken slumberings, nor wild unrest,
No memories darkening his dying couch ;
But happy thoughts to cheer his lonely path,

Across the pilgrim's vale,—forgiveness breathed
For all who in his life had called him foe.
Great-hearted RAGLAN! it may be, too late
They did thee justice,—but a braver heart,
A chief more courteous, or a soul more kind,
Ne'er passed unto a soldier's sepulchre.

Others, in peaceful homes have gently died,
The lords of intellect, old council-peers,
Whose wisdom stood their country in good stead;
Heroes of bygone days on flood and field,
Have laid their armor by, and sunk to sleep;
Many a veteran soldier of the Cross
Hath trod his path of usefulness, and left
Life's proudest memory behind, that he
'Allured to brighter worlds and led the way.'

I see a sunbeam rising over all,
A ray, divinely human, that will shed
O'er the far future one glad Christian truth;
How, in that hour when most man's spirit yearns
For woman's gentler offices, that parting hour,

When his last visual ray delights to rest
On Angel forms which o'er his cradle bent;
How in that hour, beneath a foreign sky—
An alien clime,—a martyr sisterhood,
Missions of mercy, passed from couch to couch,
Holding the fever-cup to each dry lip,
And whispering words of sweetest hopefulness,
Of future glories in the better land.

Successor! go you forth, and in your reign
If war again should darken o'er the earth,
May such another angel-troop arise,
To cheer the soldier when his field is done,
As those sweet sisters—NIGHTINGALE'S fair band."

RETURN.

RETURN, return, thou wanderer !
Back to thy native shore ;
Whilst thou art gone the homestead seems
To us a home no more.

The lark still carols to the morn
His immemorial lay,
But it hath not the olden charm
For us—and thou away.

Our father ! time indeed hath been
All gentleness to him,
For though his form be less erect,
His eye a shade more dim ;

Yet still he hath the same old smile,
 We ever thought so kind,
And still the same indulgent heart,
 To all our errors blind.

O brother ! in the distant lands
 Where thou art straying now,
Perusing life's strange characters
 On many an alien brow ;

Or, haply if thou traversest
 Those far-off Indian seas,
Of which you often read to us
 From quaint old histories ;

Bethink thee of those early scenes,
 Wherein thy youth was passed,
The desert's bright oasis, where
 Love's anchorage holds fast.

Return, return, thou wanderer !

Back to thy native shore ;

With thee again beneath our roof,

It will be home once more.

THE DEATH OF MAHOMED.

Silent the footfall in Medina's streets,
And low the voices that in converse blend,
Hushed and unwoke the cithern's melody—
For lo! the Prophet ebbs a poisoned life.
Wo now Arabia, a mourner sits
In all thy homes—palace, and mosque, and tent,
In all thy hearts—pilgrim, and chief, and slave.

Music breathes,
In faint, low harmony around the couch
Whereon the Creed-creator languishes ;
Bending above him, one true, faithful heart,
The best beloved—Ayesha—who alone
May hear the sufferer's gasping agonies.
Many an early wrong is now repaired,
With all the bounty of a contrite heart ;
And by his side, a scroll, but newly writ,
Is voiced with Freedom to each favorite slave.

Repose hath cast its softness, and unbent
The sterner features of that brow, whose frown
Had erst shook nations with an earthquake's throe :
The soft, mild glance of childhood hath returned
With all its dreaminess to those dark eyes,
Gazing so vacant now ; his mind retracks
That wondrous past he trod so fatefully ;
He stands again in Hira's lonely cave,
Weaving for millions bond of centuries—
Again he hears the “Allah Ackbar” shout,
Which hailed him conqueror on Beder's heights—
Again the triumph, and the hour return,
The proudest of his life, when Mecca first
In her wild sorrow from her temple heard
The Prophet's muezzin call the hour of prayer.

“Ayesha ! place my head upon thy lap—
We must part soon, thou, and this world, and I,
Pillow me close—yet closelier to thy breast,
And press thy warm lips lovingly to mine,
Ere that my soul go forth. I hear a sound
Of rushing wings that musically wave,

Celestials they, and they have come to bear
God's own to Paradise—Farewell ! Farewell !
Death's frown is veiled before the smile of Faith ;
And Hope within the temple-portals stands
In beck'ning attitude, and voices swell
In tones of welcome—mine shall mingle soon,
And I shall breathe a fellowship with them—
'Yes ! with the Celestial companions !'* "

Arabia was lordless.

Twelve centuries, well nigh, have passed since then,
And still at eve you hear the muezzin's cry
Call back the faithful to their thoughts of him,—
While millions in that mystic worship join,
As holily as did their forefathers,
When he, the self-crowned prophet, taught his creed,
In Mecca's vanquished halls—as when he last
His pilgrim-warriors to the Kaaba led.

* "Yes ! with the Celestial companions," were the last words of Mahomed.

M O R N I N G .

A LADY and a rosebush !—happy thought,
And happier artist,—for it needs must be
Some bright original had crossed his path,
And ever after, sunshine was his lot.
Why that sweet face itself bespeaks a morn,
A morn of happiness for some brave heart,
I would such ray might sometime dawn on me.
A lover's tongue would find most ready speech,
And swear, forsooth, the tint upon that cheek
Excelled the roses' she but now hath plucked,
And think e'en then the tribute 'was too poor.
How proudly throbs some favored human heart !
On summer morn, to meet such pictured health,
And happiness, and beauty ; life becomes
At once a glad soul-Eden, and methinks

But few, to whom like apparition came,
In mortal mould, with soft and sylph-like tread,
Across some velvet lawn or graveled walk,
And met your early greeting with such smile,—
But would have echoed back the artist's thought,
And inly sighed—In truth, the MORNING comes.

EVENING.

A STAR—a fountain—and a portico,
With columns wreathed in greenest gracefulness—
The sunset glory of a summer land
Tinging the olive boughs and linden tops
With sleep-like beauty: flowers, whose incense breath
Steals forth on Nature's ear, as though it were
A fairies' concert,—everywhere a voice,
Upon whose lip the name of Evening rests.
From out that old palatial colonnade,
So greenly wreathed, with here and there a peep
Of opening blossoms for Night's garniture,—
A fair patrician girl is passing forth,
And lo! the beauty of the hour is dimmed
Before her brighter presence. Eyes, which have
That softest of all hues, the violet's—

And lips, sweet parted lips, from whence no sound
May ever come, save love or music-born ;
A brow, which poet in some happy mood,
Would call the Evening's temple ; and dark locks,
On which the gleam from star and fountain-spray
Combine in playful revel. If there be
An earthly worship which the soul permits,
What other object half so meet or fair
As is the Evening's solemn majesty,
Its beauty, and its softness, and its love,
All typified in thee.*

* Morning and Evening—represented in two colored engravings, painted by A. Solomon, and dedicated to Sir George Howland Beaumont, Bart., by the publishers, Lloyd, Brothers & Co.

WAR BALLAD.

It was spoke 'mid the cannon's smoke,
Heard o'er the battle's din
To-day each brave and Christian heart
Let mercy enter in.
And the sound of mercy's name
(O! noble English word)—
Fell like a spell on those conqu'ring hearts,
By passion and combat stirred.

It was stayed, the uplifted hand—
The gathering brow unbent—
The oath died out on the soldier's lip,
The soft heart sighed,—relent.
And the smile which so fiercely played
To watch the foeman die,
Gave graceful place to the kindly tear,
Shading the victor's eye.

So, wherever the strife may rage,
On the field or ocean's breast;
O hearts! brave hearts! when the fight is won,
Be mercy a welcome guest.
Fairest gem in the laurel crown—
Star of the hero's crest—
Victory's loftiest glory-ray—
Noblest, and first, and best.

THE COOLIE SHIP.

THERE'S a ship gliding gracefully over the wave
 Away for the Cuban shore,
She is freighted with many a dusky slave,
 Some five or six hundred, or more ;
But the ship without, and the ship within
O ! what a contrast of beauty and sin.

The sky above wears its fairest blue,
 And the waters are bounding bright,
The wind whistles forth like a cheery tune,
 To some reveling's gay delight ;
But gaze in the stifling hold below,
O ! what a picture of human woe.

The fever is raging, the death-damp lies
On many a manly brow ;
But no one friend of their youth to smooth
The pillow of sickness now :
Stowed closely away, by measurement true,
In steaming bunks of six feet by two.

Daily, some victim is hurriedly launched
To his rest in the deep green sea,
While the frantic shouts of his comrades plead—
“ O Death ! make us likewise free : ”
Misery chanting her loudest song—
“ Why should we longer such life prolong ! ”

Most noble dealers in human lives,
Flesh-merchant-princes, look up ;
Come pledge us a draught of your blood-red wine,
In a full-brimmed skeleton cup :
Yours is the glory and yours the fame,
That the slave-market now is no longer a name.

Perchance you have many a distant friend
Or sister, or wife, or brother ;
Some gray-haired father whose pride you were,
Or aged and dear-loved mother :
Even as those you have leased away,
From their kindred and homesteads in broad Kathay.

And you all may wish to revisit again
The scenes which your childhood knew,
Yet 'twere hard if some of your victim's bones,
In the deep should be pillow for you ;
Speeding away with your slave-gotten store,
It were hard if you never saw home-land more.

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